



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner

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CONTACT: Kimberly Friedman
PHONE: (501) 683-4788
kimberly.friedman@arkansas.gov

Jonesboro Teacher Receives 2013 Milken Educator Award

LITTLE ROCK - When Erin Hodges went to work this morning, she had no idea she would go home with a \$25,000 check and the honor of being named one of the best teachers in the state.

Hodges, a seventh-grade English teacher at Douglas MacArthur Junior High School in Jonesboro, received the 2013 Milken Educator Award at a surprise ceremony at the school. The national award recognizes exceptional teachers, principals and specialists.

Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell and Dr. Gary Stark, the president and chief executive officer of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching and a 2001 Arkansas Milken educator, presented the award.

"Ms. Hodges' dedication and passion for teaching is evident in her students' desire to learn, as well as her collaboration and partnership with her co-workers," Kimbrell said. "The increase in students' test scores reflects her knowledge, expertise and experience."

In addition to seeing double-digit gains in students' test scores in 2011-2012, Hodges' students experienced increases in their literacy proficiency scores, which were 58 percent in 2008 and 69 percent in 2012.

Hodges incorporates technology with project-based learning to engage students with the Common Core State Standards. She was one of the first teachers at her school to use a mobile tech lab in her class, with every student receiving a Nook e-reader.

Erin's leadership skills in the school's English and seventh-grade Professional Learning Communities build collaboration among her co-workers. Through her partnerships, Hodges helped develop a plan to build intervention for struggling students into the school day.

She also is a special education co-teacher, a sponsor of the Out of the Dark drug abuse and addiction prevention program, and is a co-cheerleading coach.

Up to 40 educators around the country will be honored for 2013. The awards were first presented by the Milken Family Foundation in 1987. Since Arkansas joined the program in 1991, more than 70 educators have been honored, with \$1.75 million being awarded.

For more information about the Milken program, go to www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org.

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